

Mega Man 4

Mega Man 4^[a] is an action-platform game developed by Capcom for the Nintendo Entertainment System. It is the fourth game in the original *Mega Man* series and was originally released in Japan in 1991. The game was localized in North America the following January and in Europe in 1993.

The game's story takes place after the third defeat and supposed death of Dr. Wily, and features the Earth coming under threat from a mysterious scientist named Dr. Cossack and his eight "Robot Masters". Fearing the worst, Dr. Light sends Mega Man to save the world once again. *Mega Man 4* carries on the same action and platforming gameplay as the first three games, in which the player completes a series of stages in any order and adds the weapon of each stage's boss to Mega Man's arsenal. One notable added feature is the "New Mega Buster" (often shortened to "Mega Buster"), an upgraded arm cannon that lets the player charge a regular shot into a much more powerful blast. The development team was mindful that this innovation would change the overall feel of the game.

Despite *Mega Man 4* receiving positive critical reviews during its early 1990s release, the game is widely regarded today to represent a downward shift from the quality of the first three games in the series. The Mega Buster itself has been considered an overused mechanic by several sources. *Mega Man 4* was re-released on the Japanese PlayStation, PlayStation Network, and mobile phones; the North American *Mega Man Anniversary Collection* and worldwide on the Virtual Console for 3 Nintendo systems (Wii, Nintendo 3DS and Wii U).

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Plot

Mega Man 4 takes place in an unspecified year during the 21st century, described as the year "20XX". One year after the events of *Mega Man 3*, a mysterious Russian scientist named Dr. Cossack unleashes an army of robots with the intention of world domination, much like Dr. Wily before him. Dr. Light calls upon his own greatest creation, the hero Mega Man, to go after Cossack's Robot Masters, who have seized control of eight cities.^[6] He also equips Mega Man with the New Mega Buster, which he developed in secret.^[7]

Mega Man 4



North American version cover art

Developer(s)	Capcom
Publisher(s)	JP / NA: Capcom EU: Nintendo
Director(s)	Yoshinori Takenaka
Producer(s)	Tokuro Fujiwara
Designer(s)	Yoshinori Takenaka S. Kobashi Keiji Inafune
Programmer(s)	Tadashi Kuwana
Artist(s)	Keiji Inafune Hayato Kaji Kazunori Tazaki
Composer(s)	Minae Fujii
Series	<i>Mega Man</i>
Platform(s)	NES/Famicom, PlayStation, mobile phone, Microsoft Windows
Release	NES JP: December 6, 1991 ^[2] NA: January 15, 1992 ^[1]

Upon defeating the eight Robot Masters — Toad Man, Bright Man, Pharaoh Man, Ring Man, Dust Man, Skull Man, Dive Man, and Drill Man — Mega Man makes his way to Cossack's icy fortress. However, in the middle of his battle with Cossack, Mega Man's brother Proto Man teleports in with Cossack's daughter, Kalinka. The girl begs Mega Man to stop fighting her father and elaborating that Dr. Wily had kidnapped her and forced her father into building an army of robots.^[8] With Wily's plan undone by Proto Man, he steps out of the shadows.^[9] Mega Man pursues his nemesis and fights through the scientist's Wily Castle, but Wily manages to escape in the end. Mega Man escapes as the fortress begins to self-destruct, and rides home on the top of a passing train, where he is greeted by Roll and Rush.

EU: January 21, 1993^[3]
PlayStation
JP: October 28, 1999^[4]
Mobile phone
JP: September 1, 2005^[5]

Genre(s)	Action, platform
Mode(s)	Single-player

Gameplay



Mega Man fires a Mega Buster blast at Toad Man. Holding down the firing button charges the arm cannon to release a powerful shot.

Mega Man 4 features similar gameplay to the previous three games.^[10] The player must complete a series of eight stages in an order of the player's choosing. The protagonist, Mega Man, is able to run, jump, shoot, and climb his way past obstacles and enemies; the game also retains the slide ability which debuted in *Mega Man 3*. At the end of each stage is a Robot Master boss. Upon defeating a Robot Master, Mega Man gains the Robot Master's signature weapon, which can then be used by the player in subsequent stages.^{[10][11]} Once all eight Robot Masters are destroyed, two separate sets of linear stages must be completed to finish the game. One major addition to the gameplay in *Mega Man 4* is the "Mega Buster", an upgraded version of Mega Man's arm cannon. By holding down the firing button, the player can now charge a shot, resulting in a blast far more powerful than the standard shot.^{[9][10][11][12]} This feature was later used in subsequent incarnations of the franchise.^[13]

The hero's dog Rush makes a return from *Mega Man 3* with the ability to transform into "Coil", "Jet", and "Marine" modes for navigating different environments.^{[10][11]}

Aside from Rush, two additional support items called the "Wire Adaptor" and the "Balloon Adaptor" also aid the player in reaching areas not normally accessible. However, these hidden adaptors must be found in the stages rather than being awarded for defeating a Robot Master.^{[9][10][12]} Like the Master Weapons, the three Rush modes and the two adaptors are each limited to an amount of weapon power that drains when in use. The character "Flip Top" Eddie is introduced in *Mega Man 4*. Eddie, who went on to appear in later *Mega Man* games, provides the player with a random item (such as health or ammunition) at designated points in some of the levels.^{[9][11]}

Development

Mega Man series artist Keiji Inafune, credited as "Inafking", stated that the development team had very few problems while working on *Mega Man 4*.^[14] Inafune designed Dr. Cossack and Kalinka as two new storyline characters for the game. Cossack, who was originally named "Dr. Vice", was made much younger than Dr. Light and Dr. Wily. Inafune also considered giving him American traits, but decided upon influences from Russia instead.^[2] Kalinka was created because so many male characters already existed in the series at this point. However, Inafune did not intend for players to compare her to Mega Man's sister Roll.^[2] The idea for Eddie originally came about during the development of *Mega Man 2*. Eddie was designed as a supporting character that "would behave like a lottery", either pleasantly surprising or disappointing the player with the item he gives Mega Man.^[2]

Mega Man 4 was the first game in the series for Hayato Kaji, credited as "K. Hayato", a prominent designer for many later *Mega Man* games. Kaji was responsible for the chargeable Mega Buster, a gameplay mechanic that would become a staple of the series.^[2] "We knew adding a two-level or three-level charge would change the whole flavor of the game in some respects, and we were very mindful of that," Inafune explained.^[2] The Robot Masters in *Mega Man 4* are a result of a design contest for fans held in Japan. With

over 70,000 character submissions, the development team spent an extended period of time narrowing them down to only eight bosses.^[2] According to Kaji, the team was very satisfied with many of the chosen designs and almost no changes were made to their original illustrations. They were so impressed with Skull Man that they scrapped an entire level being created just so they could restart it and devote it to that Robot Master.^[2] The winning eight contestants of the design contest were each issued a special "golden cartridge" edition of *Mega Man 4*. As there are only eight of these cartridges in existence, they are extremely rare and fetch a large collector's price today.^[15] The musical score for *Mega Man 4* was composed by Minae Fujii, credited as "Ojalin", while the sound programming and sound effects were handled by Yasuaki Fujita, credited as "Bun Bun", who had composed the soundtrack for *Mega Man 3* the previous year.^[16]

Reception and legacy

Mega Man 4 has received mostly positive critical reviews. Reviews contemporary with the game's release by the United States magazine *Nintendo Power* and the United Kingdom publications *Nintendo Magazine System* and *Total!* all found *Mega Man 4* to have high quality graphics, sound, and gameplay.^{[3][17][19]} However, they also noted very little improvement over previous entries in the series. *GamePro* was satisfied with the lack of changes. "*Mega Man 4* continues the tradition — crazed robot baddies, good character graphics, great background art and warped, mechanical music," the reviewer said. "When you have a good game, why make radical changes? Capcom sticks to the blueprints in *Mega Man 4* — guaranteeing happiness for *Mega Man* fans everywhere."^[12] *Mega Man 4* made it into *IGN*'s "Top 100 NES Games" list at number 95, with staff writer Matt Casamassina praising its attempt at better narrative and an essentially similar experience to the first three *Mega Man* games.^[21] Lucas M. Thomas of *IGN* stated that, as a stand-alone title, the game is one of the best experiences available from the NES library, although not when compared to its superior predecessors. He enjoyed the use of a second set of castle levels to significantly extend the length of the game, a tradition carried on by the next two titles in the series.^[18]

Numerous video game journalists and enthusiasts including Thomas, Craig Skistimas of *ScrewAttack*, *GameSpot* editors Christian Nutt and Justin Speer, and *1UP.com*'s Jeremy Parish, refer to the fourth installment as a turning point for the quality of titles in the *Mega Man* series.^{[13][18][22][23][24]} Nutt and Speer admitted that the series was beginning to deteriorate with this game, likely due to the growing reputation of the more powerful Super Nintendo Entertainment System at the time of its release.^[23] Parrish proclaimed, "Here's where the series starts to go off the rails a bit -- the Dr. Wily fake out was silly, the music was terrible, the bosses and weapons were uninspired, and the ability to charge up the Mega Buster is often cited as a game-breaking innovation."^[24] Thomas identified the chargeable Mega Buster as disrupting the balance of the game and rendering many of the Master Weapons useless, one of the concepts that set the *Mega Man* games apart from other action-platformers.^{[13][18]}

Mega Man 4 was re-released for the PlayStation as part of the *Rockman Complete Works* series in 1999.^[4] This version of the game features a special "navi mode" that guides players through each level and has arranged music remixes.^[25] A port of the *Complete Works* edition was released on the PlayStation 2 and Nintendo GameCube in 2004 and the Xbox in 2005, as part of the North American-exclusive *Mega Man Anniversary Collection*.^{[26][27]} The NES version has also been re-released on Japanese i-mode mobile phones in 2005, worldwide on the Wii's downloadable Virtual Console service in 2010, and on the Japanese PlayStation Network in 2011.^{[5][28][29][30][31]}

Reception	
Review scores	
Publication	Score
<i>GamePro</i>	★★★★★ ^[12]
<i>IGN</i>	8 out of 10 ^[18]
<i>Nintendo Power</i>	3.95 out of 5 ^[17]
<i>Nintendo Magazine System</i>	81% ^[3]
<i>Total!</i>	88% ^[19]
Award	
Publication	Award
<i>Nintendo Power</i> <i>Award '92</i>	Best Overall Game ^[20]

Elements from the game were included in the Archie Comics Mega Man series, with Pharaoh Man, Dr. Cossack, and Kalinka being introduced in the fourth story arc, "Spiritus Ex Machina" rather than in an adaptation of the game. Bright Man was later introduced early as well, with the Cossacks and the Robot Masters making recurring appearances through the series prior to it going on hiatus. The final issues of the series led up into the events of the game, with Proto Man reluctantly aiding Dr. Wily in kidnapping Kalinka and Dr. Cossack launching his Robot Master attack and making his declaration of war. Issue 55-the last issue before the hiatus-also featured Dr. Light experiencing a vision of future events, including the conflict between Mega Man and Cossack's Robot Masters.

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External links

- [Official *Rockman* website](#) (in Japanese)
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